

Social Studies Currents



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Social Studies Resources on the Web

The following resource lists have been compiled to help social studies educators in developing their curricula:

- **Black History Month**
- **Constitution Day**
- **Presidents' Day**
- **Women's History Month**
- **Vermont Studies (coming soon)**

These lists can be used as a starting point and are not meant to be all-inclusive.

To access these resources go to

http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_curriculum/history.html.

Social Studies Network Becomes Reality

Focus: Community History

Even a snowy day in January couldn't stop the first meeting of the Northeast Kingdom social studies network from being a great success!

The day was made up of presentations, discussions, and sharing around the theme "community history." A group of about 25 teachers from across grade levels looked at student projects from all around the NEK; for most of these projects the students, as young as 4th grade, conducted research through their local historical societies. Monica Morrissey a teacher from Greensboro, even shared her documentation about how her project integrated with technology, language arts,

and math! Thanks also go to George McKelvey, Peggy Gibson, Amy Cunningham, Cynthia Tokos and Helen Beattie for their presentations.

Future Plans

At the end of the day the group decided that they wanted to continue this newly-formed social studies network and brainstormed ideas about what types of networking/professional development they needed. Things like assessment, sharing of ideas and problems, "mini" content seminars, and integration made the list. It was decided that the group would meet once in the fall and once in the spring, with the fall

meeting to include offerings of interested to elementary teachers (who might not be able to attend two meetings a year). Bruce Richardson, the director of the Northeast Kingdom School Development Center and co-sponsor of the day, is sending out a needs assessment form to a wider group of social studies teachers. This feedback will be used to set the agenda for the next meeting.

If you would like to see a social studies network formed in your area, please get in touch with your ESA director or with Sigrid Lumbra at (802) 828-0200 or sigridlumbra@education.state.vt.us.



Legislative Update

The following social studies-related legislation is currently working its way through the legislative process. To read the full text of a bill, to track its status, or to find committee hearings, go to <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/>.

S.46 – Freedom of Speech and Press for Students (A public school student shall have the right to exercise freedom of speech and of the press)

S.119 – Civics Educator in the Legislative Council (Provides for a civics educator based at the State House)

S.306 -- Teaching of International Knowledge and Foreign

Languages (Creates a council on international education to encourage teaching of geography, history, economics, culture, arts, and languages of other world regions in Vermont public schools)

H.94 – Mandatory Teaching of Civics in High School (requires teaching of civics in high school and directs the state board of education to adopt standards for a civics curriculum)

H.305 – Distribution and Teaching of the Vermont Constitution (In grades 5, 8, and 11, Vermont schools shall teach and test the contents of the Constitution of the State of Vermont)

H.319 – Teaching Media Literacy in Vermont Schools (Students should learn to use media effectively in all subject areas)

H.371 – Teaching of Vermont History and Government in Middle School and High School (Vermont schools shall teach and test Vermont history and government in grade 7 or 8 and in grade 11 or 12)

H.425 – Council on Civics Education (Establishes a council on civics education to strengthen civics education opportunities for all Vermonters)

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"Ladakh is the highest, most remote and least populated region in all of India, and has been described as 'the last Shangri-la'."

Spotlight: Vermont Intercultural Semesters

The second VIS semester in Ladakh, India finds the 12 intrepid students and 3 teachers off on a trekking/homestay expedition to Himalayan villages of Likir (a lovely village with an impressive monastery headed by the Dalai Lama's brother), Hemis-Shukpachan (a tranquil village at 11,810 ft), and Ang, a prosperous and fertile village on the banks of the Dang-dong Tokpo. This month, the group settled in at a school on the banks of the Indus River, and connected closely with Ladakhi students there, living and working together to maintain the solar-powered school.

Ladakh is (like Vermont) somewhat "off the beaten

track," situated on the boundary between the peaks of the western Himalaya and the vast Tibetan plateau. It is the highest, most remote and least populated region in all of India, and has been described as 'the last Shangri-la'. As in the rest of India, English is the unifying language, and important to educational advancement and in commerce. The relatively small-scale populations in both Ladakh and Vermont results in intriguing similarities: strong community connections; a will to maintain traditional ways of doing things that work; and the capacity to manage development and change to benefit local peoples and their futures.

On March 3, Curtis Koren, Exec. Dir. of VIS, went to Ladakh with Chris Albertine, an audio engineer and radio producer for VPR, Greg Sharrow, folklorist from the Vermont Folklife Center, and Greg's daughter Olivia, a high school senior with experience in documentary field research. This team, along with VIS students and teachers in Ladakh, will produce print and radio stories through interaction with the local community.

The VIS Academic Program is place-based and mutually beneficial to both sets of students. For more information go to <http://www.vermontis.org/>

"Networking" Social Studies & Writing

This spring's literacy network meetings are focusing on the following social studies content:

Grades K-2:

"The Past, the Present, and Change" focuses on changes in school life over time.

Grades 3-4:

"Expressions of Cultural Change" focuses on changes in the Abenaki culture in Vermont.

Grades 5-6:

"Formation of a Nation: Leaders and their Impact" focuses on leadership qualities

of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson

Grades 7-12:

"Women Who Made Change: the Power of Persuasion" focuses on women who made change using the power of persuasion; materials include quotes, biographical resources, and primary source documents.

For the grades 7-12 meetings there are two professional development strands being planned, one for writing teachers and one for social studies teachers.

For more information about meeting locations and times or to register, go to: <http://www.dbweb.ed.state.vt.us/vpdn/>



"American Stars of Teaching"

The U.S. Department of Education again plans to honor outstanding classroom teachers through the American Stars of Teaching program. The Department's Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative is seeking nominations and information about teachers who are improving student achievement, using innovative strategies in the classroom, and making a difference in the lives of their students.

To learn more or nominate a teacher to become an American Star of Teaching, please visit the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/index.html>

All nominations must be completed by April 15th.

Women have only half fulfilled their mission when they have fitted their children for the world – they should have a part in fitting the world for their children.
– Annette W. Parmalee

And if we listen, we can hear the voices of Vermont farm women, who in the pioneer days of this state, worked the soil with rough, red hands, alongside the men who cleared the land. I stand here because of the women who worked the mills in Winooski, who taught in the one-room schoolhouses of Alburg, and who entered this Hall of Representatives in Montpelier before me.
– Madeleine Kunin

What are the SQS?

The Vermont School Quality Standards (SQS), which have been updated recently through a statewide revision process, are designed to ensure that all students in Vermont public schools are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality and are designed to enable them to achieve or exceed the expectations set forth in *Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*.

The SQS outline expectations for a variety of measures, from graduation requirements to assessment, professional development to school facilities. For a full text of the SQS, go to <http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/pdfdoc/board/rules/2000.pdf/>

What is a Local Comprehensive Assessment System?

The vision of the SQS supports a model that places

classroom assessment at the core of the assessment system. Common grade, team, school, and state assessments would round out the Local Comprehensive Assessment System.

A Local Comprehensive Assessment System described by the SQS includes four requirements. The system must:

1. enable decisions to be made about instruction, professional development, and educational resources and curriculum.
2. be consistent with the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment System adopted by the State Board of Education in November 1996, as amended from time to time.
3. align with the Framework (**and Grade Expectations**).
4. employ a balance of classroom-based and school-level assessments.

What are important questions to consider in social studies assessment?

In developing your LCAS, you

will want to consider the following questions:

☐ What types of assessments will enable decisions to be made about social studies instruction, professional development, educational resources and curriculum?

☐ How will these assessments be aligned with the social studies GE's?

☐ What processes will your school employ to develop a balance of classroom-based and school-based assessments in social studies?

What is the local assessment time frame?

The development and refinement of local assessment systems is a continuous process. The initial time requirements call for a development plan which will outline a school's approach to meeting the four requirements for local assessment in all content areas. The graphic below provides a timeline for this process.

What is currently happening in social studies assessment?

Some schools and districts around the state are currently working to develop classroom and local assessments in social studies; many other schools are in the planning stages. A recent memo outlined in detail the local assessment process and timeline. This memo can be accessed at:

http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_curriculum.html#links

If you have questions about local assessment or if you would like to share the work that you have already done around local assessment with colleagues around the state, please contact Sigrid Lumbrat at sigridlumbrat@education.state.vt.us.

LCAS Timeline

- ➡ Development Plan for the Local Comprehensive Assessment System
First Draft Completed: **9/1/2006**
- ➡ Development Plan for the Local Comprehensive Assessment System
Final Plan Completed: **9/1/2008**
- ➡ Full implementation of Local Comprehensive Assessment System
Date to be determined by the LEA



Information Sharing

How might Vermont's social studies community better share information about our ongoing work around curriculum and assessment development?

Is there something happening in your school that would benefit others if they knew about it?

This newsletter is a first attempt at sharing information about social studies. Please forward this letter

to any of your colleagues who might be interested.

Your ideas and input are critical to this process. Please contact Sigrid Lumbrat, DOE Social Studies Coordinator, at (802) 828-0200 or sigridlumbrat@education.state.vt.us with any comments, feedback, suggestions, or to get on the mailing list for the next newsletter.

"It is difficult to get the news from poems yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there."
William Carlos Williams - from "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower"